



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES ARREST OF EVANSVILLE-AREA POSTAL WORKER ON CHILD EXPLOITATION CHARGES

“Operation Community Watch” prosecution allegedly involves thousands of images and videos

PRESS RELEASE

EVANSVILLE – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced today that Floyd M. Thompson, age 59, of Evansville, has been charged with possession and receiving child pornography. The United States Postal Service has confirmed that Thompson started working at the Elberfeld office in 2005 and was recently named postmaster. Hogsett said the filing of formal charges comes as his office has launched Operation Community Watch, a new effort which aims to reduce the abuse of Hoosier children through innovative investigative techniques and aggressive prosecution.

“Through Operation Community Watch, this office and our law enforcement partners are unwavering in our resolve to find and prosecute those who exploit our children,” Hogsett said. “As this case shows, you are not anonymous online – if you engage in this behavior, you will be identified and you will be prosecuted.”

According to charging documents, law enforcement first began their investigation in June 2013, when an undercover member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Southern Indiana Child Exploitation Task Force connected with a computer that was allegedly sharing sexually-explicit images depicting young children. After downloading a number of these files from the user, investigators traced the online activity to a home in Evansville.

As a result of this information, a federal search warrant was executed on August 13 at the Evansville home of defendant Thompson. Federal agents interviewed Thompson and took his computer equipment into custody. A preliminary forensic examination of these computers allegedly revealed thousands of images and videos of child pornography depicting young girls between the ages of 3 and 12 years old.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Todd Shellenbarger, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Thompson faces up to twenty years in federal prison if he is convicted. In addition, the defendant also could be sentenced to a lifetime term of supervised release at the end of his prison term, as well as registration as a sexual offender.

This arrest comes as Hogsett has announced a comprehensive crackdown on child exploitation in Indiana. Just last year, he launched “Operation Community Watch,” which will allow prosecutors and investigators to use cutting-edge techniques to identify and charge people in Hoosier communities who are engaged in the receipt and trafficking of child pornography materials. In this case, these efforts were facilitated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Evansville Police Department.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a larger nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Hogsett pointed out that in the last Project Safe Childhood reporting year, the Office prosecuted 52 defendants, an increase of 37% over the prior year, and 49 defendants were convicted and sentenced. These are all-time records for the Office.

The greatest measure of the PSC program’s impact, however, is the identification and rescue of child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Over the last year, the U.S. Attorney’s Office successfully identified more than 120 child victims, including minors in Indiana, numerous places in the United States, Canada, Switzerland, and other countries around the world.

Led nationally by United States Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

Informations, indictments, and criminal complaints are only a charge and are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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